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EXCHANGE VISITS OF CHURCH LEADERS FROM U.S.A. AND FROM U.S.S.R. IN MARCH AND JUNE

A mission to "manifest the spiritual fellowship which is ours in Christ" and to "increase mutual understanding through an exchange of views respecting the life and work of the churches" has been announced by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. It is to take place by visits between church leaders from the United States and from the Soviet Union in March and in June. Background includes an appeal issued in 1954 by the World Council of Churches Assembly at Evanston "to the representatives of the churches in those countries between which tension exists to visit one another." Promptly the Department of International Affairs of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. began to explore possibilities of such a visit. In June, 1955, the General Board authorized the President, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, to take such steps as might be necessary for this project. Definite plans were announced at the General Board meeting in New York on February 1.

This will be the first broadly representative church group from the U.S.A. to visit the Soviet Union since the Russian revolution almost forty years ago.

The Christian leaders from the U.S.A. are flying to Moscow by commercial airline on March 9 from New York, planning to make a ten-day visit with Christian leaders in Russia. The delegation of Russian church leaders is expected to visit in the U.S.A. with church leaders here beginning the first of June for about ten days.

The purposes of this exchange visit were first expressed in a letter to Patriarch Alexei by the President of the National Council on June 9, 1955: "It is the thought of the National Council that such a deputation meeting with a deputation of Christians in the U.S.S.R. would be a manifestation of the spiritual fellowship which is ours in Christ. Opportunity would thereby be given for an exchange of views respecting the life and work of the churches in our respective countries, including the efforts of the churches directed toward the achieving of a just and durable peace." The President assured the Patriarch that "the American churches are most eager to bring to fulfillment the peace hopes cherished by so many of the common people of the world."

In reply, on behalf of Patriarch Alexei, Metropolitan Nikolay gave this favorable response: "With brotherly love in Christ we are ready to meet your (to page 4)

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WIDESPREAD SUPPORT NEEDED FOR CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Growing concern is being expressed in the press and in many quarters as to the continuation and expansion of the government's constructive programs of international cooperation. Concern mounts as these are soon to be considered in Congress where there are some opponents of such programs, or of various phases of them.

An analysis in the November issue of the Newsletter set forth the meaning and importance of such constructive programs in light of the new communist offensive in trade, various kinds of missions, and economic aid. Since then, further threatening developments have taken place in Asia, the Near East, Africa, and Latin America. All have underland the necessity for the U.S.A. to take a new initiative in constructive, curative programs of international cooperation. These include: economic development, technical cooperation, development assistance, increased information services, and more liberal and enlightened trade programs. These are necessary, not simply to attempt to compete with communist promises, but to deepen and broaden the measure and effectiveness of our moral leadership in international relations.

In his State of the Union Message, President Eisenhower promised that in Asia, Europe, the Near East and Latin America, we shall continue to give help to nations struggling to maintain freedom against the threat of communist coercion or subversion and to cooperate vigorously in trade and other measures designed to assist economic progress in those areas. He declared: "Because the conditions of poverty and unrest in less developed areas make their people a special target of international communism, there is a need to help them to achieve the economic growth and stability necessary to preserve their independence against Communist threats and enticements.

"In order that our friends may better achieve the greater strength that is our common goal, they need assurance of continuity in economic assistance for development projects and programs which we approve and which requires a period of years for planning and completion. Accordingly, I ask Congress to grant limited authority to make longer term commitments for assistance to such projects, to be fulfilled from appropriations to be made in future fiscal years."

Church support for such programs has continued to increase. One of many examples, illustrating the converging of interests in this, is the action of the Executive Board of the Division of Foreign Missions, National Council of Churches, December 5, at Dayton. (A previous similar resolution had been adopted by the Rural Missions Cooperating Committee.): 1. To "express its concern over the operation of the U.S. Technical Assistance program, and record its belief that this program should be kept free from military considerations; and that it should be administered to provide continuity of policy and personnel and thus ensure a more cohesive and consistent program. Further, that it record the belief that foreign economic aid should be provided in an amount best calculated to foster international peace and good will. 2. That in cooperation with the Department of International Affairs, an Ad Hoc Committee representing the D.F.M...formulate a proper statement, taking into consideration the above views and in line with the previous actions of the General Board, for presentation to the authorities in Washington at the proper time."

While such action is being planned in the National Council of Churches, it is also imperative that other church groups and individual Christians express their Christian convictions and concern for the continuance, increase, and provision for long term commitments in these constructive programs of international cooperation. Communications should be addressed to their Senators and Representatives, to the State Department and to Mr. John B. Hollister, Director of the International Cooperation Administration.

Information on these issues is available in such materials as: "ICC Fact Sheet," a 6 page leaflet, and Background for Mutual Security, a 26 page booklet, both available from International Cooperation Administration, Washington 25, D.C.

ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL IMPACT IN CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL SESSION

Several issues of considerable importance in U.S. foreign policy confront this session of Congress. Some are already introduced and others will be.

The Mutual Aid Program is among the most crucial issues in its purposes and amounts and in the long-term arrangements requested by the President.

The President appeals for the passage of OTC: In his State of the Union Message, for the third time within a year, President Eisenhower appealed to Congress to approve membership of the U.S. in the proposed Organization for Trade Cooperation. This would be an agency set up to administer the international program of General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade in which the U.S. is already participating. Part of the urgency of the President's plea lies in the fact that the U.S., with approximately 20% of the world's trade, is the controlling factor in whether OTC will come into being. If it should not, much of the GATT program would disintegrate and many of the nations now free would be drawn by economic trends into the trade orbit of the communist bloc. The President declared:

"Strong economic ties are an essential element in our free-world partnership. Increasing trade and investment help all of us to prosper together. Gratifying progress has been made in this direction, most recently by the 3-year extension of our trade agreements legislation.

"I most earnestly request that the Congress approve our membership in the organization for Trade Cooperation which would assist the carrying out of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to which we have been a party since 1948. Our membership in the OTC will provide the most effective and expeditious means for removing discriminations and restrictions against American exports and in making our trade agreements truly reciprocal ... Being strictly an administrative entity, the Organization for Trade Cooperation cannot, of course, alter the control by Congress of the tariff, import and customs policies of the United States."

Immigration and Naturalization Amendments: The President proposed far-reaching changes in the immigration laws, in a special message to Congress, February 9. These would include: Increase in the quota from 154,657 to 220,000 per year, the additional 65,000 distributed according to immigration since 1924, thus increasing the proportion from southern Europe. Unused quotas to be pooled for aliens having special skills or relatives in the U.S. The end of quota "mortgages" under the Displaced Persons Act. Re-examination of the national origins concept. Waiver of finger print requirements for temporary visits by aliens. Give the Attorney General discretion to grant relief in the thousands of alien hardship cases now handled each year by Congress in individual bills. Make administrative changes in the law to eliminate "hardships" and unnecessary restrictions on travel.

National Reserve Plan: In view of the relative failure of this plan passed in the last session of Congress, it is likely that amendments will be pressed for, possibly in the nature of compulsion or conscription.

Bills introduced during the first session, remaining active, include: Amendments to the Refugee Relief Act to modify restrictive procedures (HR6594 and S2113) in Committee, in both Houses; Bricker Amendment to limit treaty-making powers of the President (S.J.Res.1), in Senate Committee; Granting statehood to Hawaii and Alaska (HR2535 and S49), reported in the House and in Committee in the Senate; Simplifies customs definitions, classifications and rate structure (HR6040), passed in House, in Senate Committee. Authorizes construction of an atomic-powered merchant ship to promote peaceful uses of atomic energy (HR6243 and S2523), passed in House, reported in Senate.

EXCHANGE VISITS OF CHURCH LEADERS FROM U.S.A. AND FROM U.S.S.R (Cont. from p. 1)

delegation. He also expressed the hope that plans might be made to assure a two-way visit: "We would like to visit you and get acquainted with the church life in America."

The General Board concurred in tentative plans made by October and requested that inquiry be made of the State Department on ways and means of carrying them out. Officers of the Council met with Secretary of State Dulles and Mr. William A. Crawford, Deputy Director, Office of Eastern European Affairs, to clarify arrangements.

From time to time individual churchmen have visited the U.S.S.R. and recently delegations of Baptists and of Quakers have gone to Russia. Churchmen from Russia have recently visited Britain and Canada. The National Council deputation will be the first such broadly representative group to share in an exchange visit. The team has been chosen to represent a cross-section of the leadership of the National Council with its constituency of 30 Protestant and Eastern Orthodox church bodies including over 35 million members. The wish was also expressed in the original letter to the Russian churchmen for the church leaders from the U.S. "to meet with representative leaders of other church bodies in the Soviet Union either separately or jointly with the deputation of the Russian Orthodox Church." Other Church bodies in Russia include Baptists, Lutherans and Methodists.

The personnel for the deputation from the National Council of Churches includes: The Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, President of the National Council and Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., chairman of the group. The Rt. Rev. Henry Knox Sherrill, Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church and past President of the National Council of Churches. The Rev. Dr. Herbert Gezork, Baptist, President of Andover Newton Theological Seminary; member of the Department of International Affairs of the National Council. The Rev. Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, President of the United Lutheran Church in America; presiding officer of the Policy and Strategy Committee of the National Council. Mr. Charles C. Parlin, Methodist, lay member of the General Board of the National Council. Bishop D. Ward Nichols, Secretary of the Bishops' Council of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; member of the General Board of the National Council. Dr. Paul B. Anderson, Secretary of the International Committee of the National Councils of the U.S. and Canada of the Y.M.C.A.; member, Department of International Affairs, National Council; he spent several years with the Y.M.C.A. in Russia and uses that language. The Rev. Dr. Roswell P. Barnes, Associate General Secretary of the National Council. Rev. Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk, Executive Director, Department of International Affairs, National Council, executive officer of the deputation. Mr. Donald C. Bolles, Director, Public Relations Department of the National Council, will accompany the delegation as a staff assistant.

Subjects of mutual interest which it is hoped will be discussed in the conversations include the following: What the churches of the respective countries have done and are doing to promote the cause of world peace; the freedom of the churches to fulfill their mission; the Christian faith and other religions; the Christian faith and modern science; the current trends in theological education; Christian literature; relations between the churches in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

Speaking of possible expectations, President Blake commented: "We cannot say what effect the establishment of closer relations between Christians of the two countries will have in improving relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. We believe that improved relations between nations require a frank and honest recognition of the differences that prevail between them... The deputation will represent vigorously our convictions on the moral issues underlying the tensions prevailing in the world today. While, therefore, we cannot be sure that agreement can or should be reached at many points, we do hope that under the guidance of Almighty God this exchange of visits will contribute toward a larger measure of understanding and goodwill."

DISARMAMENT: HEARINGS ANNOUNCED BY SENATE COMMITTEE: UN DELIBERATIONS RESUME SOON

The special Subcommittee on Disarmament, of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, has begun hearings, the first session January 25, with plans to resume hearings about February 27. Announcement of the hearings was made by the Chairman of the special Subcommittee, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.Minn.). The first witness was the Special Assistant to the President for Disarmament, Harold E. Stassen, who has been specializing on disarmament problems since March 1955. He described the activities of his office since its conception, on the principal problems in the control of armaments, and gave a broad view of U.S. policy in this field. His testimony is available from The White House,Washington, D.C.

Other members of the administration who have been invited to testify include Secretary of State Dulles, Chairman Strauss of the Atomic Energy Commission, military leaders and Secretary of Defense Wilson, the latter to discuss the problem of reconciling current proposals of this government and others on disarmament with the needs of national security.

A series of hearings is projected during the coming months as part of a Senate study of reduction and control of armaments. Other key Administration officials will be called later and private citizens and organizations will present their views. The Committee is considering hearings also outside of Washington.

The purpose of the study, according to Chairman Humphrey, "is to help to clarify the issues of disarmament for the Senate and the American people. For ten years this problem has been worked over... Some of the most vital questions which confront us as a nation are tied up with it. Disarmament is linked to national security. There is no margin for error in disarmament in a nuclear age.

"This Subcommittee is going to cooperate with the Executive Branch in every possible way. But it is going to proceed independently to examine the problem of disarmament and the policies which we are pursuing to make certain that they are adequate policies and to determine whether they can be made to serve the national interests more effectively.

"The Subcommittee is made up equally of Democrats and Republicans. It is bi-partisan because the questions we are dealing with do not leave room for partisan consideration. They are questions of vital importance to the nation as a whole and we propose to treat them that way."

Members of the Subcommittee in addition to Senator Humphrey are: Senators Sparkman (D. Ala.), Barkley (D. Ky.), Byrd (D. Va.), Symington (D. Mo.), Pastore (D. R.I.), Wiley (R. Wis.), Hickenlooper (R. Ia.), Knowland (R. Cal.), Bridges (R. N.H.), Saltonstall (R. Mass.), Bricker (R. Ohio).

The United Nations Subcommittee on Disarmament will resume deliberations soon, probably in March, possibly in London. At that time, it is likely that the United States will have various proposals in readiness as to possible steps for the reduction and regulation of armaments, as it is anticipated that other nations will also bring proposals now being prepared. One of the first items on the agenda will be a combination of President Eisenhower's gateway plan for mutual aerial inspection and exchange of blue prints, along with Marshall Bulganin's proposal for establishing control posts at strategic centers. This was recommended by the UN General Assembly by a vote of 56 to 7 as a priority for initial steps of agreement and implementantion by the Subcommittee on Disarmament. Harold E. Stassen will participate in the UN Subcommittee sessions representing the U.S. with a policy, recently reaffirmed, of persisting concern to find genuine ways for the reduction and regulation of armaments with the best possible means of inspection and control.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? REPORTS OF CHURCHES

OVERSEAS RELIEF GOAL $10,900,000; "GREAT HOUR OF SHARING" - MARCH 11

Major U.S. Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches are seeking $10,900,000 in the 1956 United Appeal for overseas programs of relief and reconstruction. The goal -- the highest ever set -- was announced recently by Harper Sibley, chairman of Church World Service, interdenominational relief and rehabilitation wing of the National Council of Churches. The figure is nearly $1,500,000 greater than last year's. A major portion of the additional funds sought, Mr. Sibley said, are earmarked for use in sending abroad U.S. surplus wheat, corn, beans and rice recently released by the Government for free distribution by religious and other voluntary relief organizations.

Highlights of the appeal will be the "One Great Hour of Sharing" observances scheduled Sunday, March 11, when special offerings will be made simultaneously in thousands of U.S. churches.

Major overseas distress areas to receive relief aid this year are India, Pakistan, Korea, the Near East, Japan, Greece, Germany, Italy, Vietnam and Hongkong. Mr. Sibley said the funds will also be used to provide other foods, medicines and general supplies in emergency areas and for long-term health and nutrition programs, resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees and for self-help and vocational training projects.

WILL CHRISTIANS ACT NOW?

The urgent necessity for communication with representatives in government by church groups and members on important issues is illustrated by an event in Washington recently. A churchman, consulting his Congressman on international cooperation programs (see p. 2), was shown the file of letters and materials received on this issue by his Congressman. Only those opposed had taken the time and trouble to write. There were no letters or materials favoring these programs of constructive international cooperation. The immediate question confronting church groups and members on issues such as this during the current period of Congressional and political decisions is this: Will Christians communicate well-informed convictions to the people and places in Washington where policies and appropriations will be made during the next few weeks?

"HEIFER PROJECTS" LIFE-GIVING SERVICES INCREASE

Heifer Projects Inc. has set itself the record task of shipping 1,545 cattle, 627 goats, 295 pigs, 2,000 sheep, 168,000 chicks, 2,000 hatching eggs, and 130 packages of honey bees to war-devastated or agriculturally underdeveloped areas in 1956. The goals, described as "the most ambitious program ever attempted" by the intercreedal relief and rehabilitation agency, were approved by its board of directors at the annual meeting at New Windsor, Md. Heifer Project now has been in operation eleven years.

This Newsletter is published 10 times per year, Sept. through June, by the Dept. of International Affairs of the National Council of Churches; the Honorable Ernest A. Gross, Chairman; Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk, Executive Director; Dr. Kenneth L. Maxwell, Associate Executive Director, editor of the Newsletter. It is prepared by the staff to provide specialized information for education and action on current issues. Viewpoints expressed in it should not necessarily be regarded as the policy of the Dept. or of the National Council of Churches. It is designed for denominational and council secretaries; national, state and local committees; ministers, laymen, women and young people who wish to keep up with the work of the churches in this field. Subscription: $1.00 per year.

RESOURCES: NEW MEMO; CAREERS; SUMMER; MEMORANDUM ON UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW "MEMO" FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE: New in format and function is the publication, Memo, issued twice monthly by the Washington Office of the National Council of Churches. Formerly it was a skeletal listing of issues and schedules of legislative processes gathered at the nation's capitol, usually on one sheet. Now it is a four page, double column, attractively set up, printed publication giving fuller background and interpretation of selected events in Washington. The January 15 issue carried, for example, three major topics: Congress in an Election Year, State of the Union Message, and Farm Message. Under eye-catching heads for quick reading, sub-topics are treated under each subject. This publication comes on the "must" list for church leaders and members who wish to keep abreast of the Washington scene, as viewed from the NCC Washington office, Earl Frederick Adams, General Director, Charles M. Smith, Associate Director, and Nadine Blair, Editor of Memo. Address: 122 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington 2, D.C.; subscription, $1.00 per year, two issues per month except August and September.

INFORMATION FOLDER ON OVERSEAS SERVICE: Christian Horizons, 12 pp., is the annual publication of SVM, listing opportunities for missionary service around the world. It is the only comprehensive, interdenominational outline of openings under the mission boards associated in the Divisions of Home and Foreign Missions of the National Council of Churches. It lists both Full-time or "Career" Service and Short-term Service opportunities around the globe in such fields as: Agricultural Work; Business Administration; Education Work -- Administrators, Librarians, Directors of Christian Education, College and Seminary Professors, Normal School, High School, Junior High, and Elementary Teachers; Evangelists and General Church Work; Literacy and Literature; Medical Work -- Dentists, Doctors, Nurses, Administrators, Health Educators, Social Workers, Technicians; Rural Church Work, Community Work; Social Group Work; Technical and Industrial Work; Youth Work and Student Work. It gives the geographical location, preparation required, and the denominational board or agency sponsoring the work. It also calls attention to the "new kind of missionary call" for thousands of young people going overseas every year in commercial or industrial enterprises or under government appointment. Single copies of Christian Horizons, free; quantity rates quoted. The Student Volunteer Movement, the Commission of World Mission of the United Student Christian Council, is a unit of the National Council of Churches. Address: SVM, 156 Fifth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.

LISTING OF SUMMER SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AND STUDENTS: "Invest Your Summer," now published for 1956, includes the most comprehensive listing of summer opportunities in work camps, students-in-government and students-in-industry projects, caravans, community and individual service projects, and mission fields. Information from many denominations and agencies active in such fields, compiled by the Commission on Youth Service Projects. Order from: National Council of Churches, Office of Publication and Distribution, 120 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y. 20¢ per copy.

MEMORANDUM ON UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: CCIA's annual publication, Memorandum of Selected Actions of the UN General Assembly, for the Tenth Session, 20 September to 20 December, 1955 is available in limited quantities. Covers 19 major categories, giving for each issue: Background, CCIA Procedure, General Assembly Action. Includes brief Introduction and an appendix on "Disarmament and Peaceful Change," A Statement adopted by the Executive Committee of the CCIA, 28 July 1955, and by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, 4 August 1955 at Davos, Switzerland. Designed for the specialist in international affairs. Single copies available while the limited supply lasts from the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, 297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y. Price: 50¢ each.

RESOURCES (cont.): SOUND COLOR FILM: FOR SEMINARS - CHURCH NEAREST TO UN

MOVIE: Now in 16 mm. -- "ASSIGNMENT CHILDREN". Starring children of the world and Danny Kaye, this special feature film is now available in 16 mm., in Technicolor, with sound. This moving portrayal of UNICEF was reviewed in the Newsletter last year when being shown at commercial theaters only. Inquiry from our readers then brought forth a reply from Paramount, the producers, that their policy was for it to have as wide a circulation as possible to the general public, first, with all profits going to UNICEF; later release was planned in 16 mm. for use with smaller more specially interested groups such as those in our churches. Meanwhile, for its excellence it was given the Photoplay Achievement Award. Now, this Paramount production presented by the United Nations and the Motion Picture Industry, is available through Association Films, Inc., at the following branches: Broad at Elm, RIDGEFIELD, N. J., 561 Hillgrove Ave., LA GRANGE, ILL., 1108 Jackson St., DALLAS, TEXAS, 351 Turk St.,SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. Approximately 20 minutes in length. Rental $5.00.

NEAREST CHURCH TO THE UNITED NATIONS: The Church of the Covenant, Presbyterian, 310 E. 42nd Street, across the street from the United Nations Plaza is a resource which should be known to those arranging for UN Seminars. The minister and members including an active Women's Association, are anxious to be of service to various denominational, church council and other religious groups in several ways, such as furnishing rooms for seminar meetings and serving group meals when desired. There is a sanctuary and an assembly hall, each seating about 250 people; these are also adaptable for smaller groups; there are also other rooms for committees or other groups of limited size. Rooms are available at fees to cover janitor service and other expenses involved in their use. Group luncheons and dinners are available at reasonable rates. Hotel accommodations in a moderate price bracket are available next door to the church at the Tudor Hotel, 304 E. 42nd Street. The church, of course, has an active parish program with many other responsibilities in addition to their fine work in relation to the United Nations; Therefore, special reservations must be planned well in advance. For further information concerning reservations or meals at the Church, address the Minister, Rev. Raymond H. Rosche, Church of the Covenant, 310 E. 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Phone: MUrray Hill 4-1849.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Mr. Alden Eberly, Boston YMCA, writes - "The Newsletter is excellent! I wish every churchman would read it." (So do we! Ed.) To aid that process, herewith is a subscription blank for people seeing the Newsletter for the first time and wishing to subscribe, or for our confirmed readers wishing to send in a subscription for a friend who would appreciate sharing the values of this publication:

TO: DEPT. OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

HEREWITH IS A SUBSCRIPTION FOR A Christian Newsletter on International Affairs FOR ONE YEAR (10 ISSUES). $1.00 is enclosed.

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